

TRIPLETS FOR FATHER MALONE

I know I've sinned, Father,
by not crediting Wormwood in my book
for the poems you published there.

If I could atone for it somehow
I'd do anything
to get published in Wormwood again.

Punish me, tell me to promise
not to masturbate again,
though maybe that's a little too easy at my age.

Was it part of the punishment
when someone picked my pocket today
as I was getting on a bus?

It's the fourth time
since I've become an old guy.
Can't that be taken into account?

Besides Wormwood, the New York establishment
has also turned against me.
There's a new in-crowd, and I'm out.

So no readings at the Poetry Center anymore,
no reviews in the Times Book Review,
no poems in the New York Review of Books.

Even smellfeast sends me rejections.
I can only get poetry published
by Exquisite Corpse these days.

I secretly revel
in getting rejection slips
after fifty years of being on the scene.

It proves I'm still a maverick.
Wouldn't you think that made me
just right for Wormwood?

—Edward Field
New York, NY